



Sweet Briar College

Newsletter

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'Aftermath of Camille' To be Summer Project

Taking advantage of the college's proximity to areas devastated by the 1969 hurricane, a field-study project called "The Aftermath of Camille" will be conducted at Sweet Briar this summer. Up to 50 students, including undergraduates from other colleges, may enroll for the six-weeks program, June 11-July 20, to earn one unit of academic credit.

Directed by Dr. Langley Wood, Coordinator of Environmental Studies at Sweet Briar, the project will investigate the extent to which portions of Nelson County, especially the upper Tye River Valley, have recovered from the ravages of the great storm.

Several other faculty members will join the staff to aid the students. Their aim is to determine, with the cooperation of residents in the area, what kinds of temporary and permanent changes resulted from Camille, and from more recent floods of less severe impact. Their purpose is also to help local, state, and federal agencies cope with future catastrophes.

"Every community that goes through such an experience is changed in some way," according to Dr. Wood, "and these changes may be seen in the social, political, psychological and economic life of its people as well as in the natural environment with its animals and plants." Dr. Wood is familiar with the area and is related to many of the upper Tye River Valley families.

Camille's long-term effects upon family structure and kinship patterns are of particular interest to Dr. Catherine H. C. Seaman, assistant professor of anthropology and sociology. A native and resident of Nelson County, Mrs. Seaman is also chairman of its School Board.

Dr. Thomas V. Gilpatrick, professor of government, would like to know more about the effects of the disaster and its aftermath upon political processes, especially as related to preparedness for future emergencies. Dr. David Johnson, assistant professor of psychology, hopes to learn more about the extent to which



Photo by V. L. Wood

Two views of the upper Tye River Valley, taken in 1929 (above) and in 1973 (below), illustrate some of the effects of 'Camille.'

Photo by L. H. Wood



this catastrophe may have modified the attitudes of residents toward their natural environment as well as their views of their own lives and those of other individuals around them.

Biologists will study the river, its fish and insect life, and new plants which may be found along the river banks and on the mountain slide areas. Dr. Jane C. Belcher, Duberg professor of ecology, will be a consultant for this aspect of the work.

Announcement of this project in December brought editorial support in *The Daily Advance*, in Lynchburg,

which said in part: "Sweet Briar College has come up with a project which is an intelligent use of a natural phenomenon almost on the campus . . . As outlined the study should be productive beyond the limits of the usual, for the material—human and otherwise—is there with testimony of word and evidence easily available . . ."

"An appealing aspect of this forthcoming study is that it may well be one more illustration of how knowing about phenomena next door enables you better to understand

(continued on page 2)

New Board Chairman, Other Members Elected

Several changes in the Board of Directors and the election of a number of new members to the Board of Overseers have taken place.



Charles N. Prothro, of Wichita Falls, Tex., is the new chairman of the Board of Directors and Overseers, succeeding Robert C. Tyson, who retired after serving 11 years on the board, the last three as chairman. Prime F. Osborn, of Louisville, succeeded Mr. Prothro as vice-chairman, and Mrs. Edward R. Harris, Jr., of Lynchburg, was elected to the seven-member Board of Directors. She has served on the Board of Overseers for two years and is chairman of the Student Affairs committee.

Mr. Prothro was elected an overseer in 1960, a director in 1968, and vice-chairman of the two boards in 1969. He has been chairman of the development committee, vice-chairman of the capital funds campaign, and chairman of the committee to select a president to succeed Dr. Anne Gary Pannell in 1971.

Engaged in various business and ranching enterprises, Mr. Prothro has been a leader in many community services in Wichita Falls and his continuing concern with education is reflected in several offices he has held. He became board chairman of Southwestern University, Georgetown, Tex., in 1966, having been a trustee since 1952; he is on the board of governors of Southern Methodist University; he has served on the Texas Commission on Higher Education and on the Texas College Coordinating Board; and he has been an officer of the Wichita Falls Board of Education. Mrs. Prothro, an alumna of Sweet Briar, organized and was the first chairman of the Friends of the Library. Their daughter, Mrs. Frank Yeager, is a 1961 Sweet Briar graduate.

Mr. Osborn, president of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad Co., was elected to the Board of Overseers in 1968 and became a director a year later. At present he serves on the Academic Affairs and the Investments and Finance committees.

As Dale Hutter, '53, Mrs. Harris was president of Student Government and a member of Phi Beta Kappa. A capable leader in many service organizations in Lynchburg, she has been vice-president of the Sweet Briar Alumnae Association and has long served as an Alumnae Representative on Admission.

Gilbert M. Grosvenor, Washington, and John B. Rogan, Charlottesville, elected as Overseers last spring, attended the Board meeting for the first time in November.

Editor of *National Geographic* and vice-president of the National Geographic Society board, Mr. Grosvenor is a trustee of the New York Zoological Society, the African Wildlife Leadership Foundation, and he is chairman of the Interior Department's Alaska Parks and Monuments Advisory Committee. He is also a director of several welfare organizations in Washington. Mrs. Grosvenor, the former Donna Kerkam, is a 1960 Sweet Briar graduate.

Mr. Rogan, a Charlottesville businessman, is president of the Ivy Construction Co., the Boar's Head Inn, and Ednam Forest Corp. He has been a leader in many civic organizations and is an active conservationist.

Announcement of additional new members of the Board of Overseers will appear in the May issue of this publication.

New Plan for Learning Italian Being Tested

A new method of teaching a foreign language is being tested this year by its originator, Dr. Ferdinando P. Alfonsi, assistant professor of Italian. Twelve students in intermediate Italian are studying the language and civilization of Italy using Dr. Alfonsi's original text, "Maria va in Italia," which he has equipped with audio and visual materials.

Dr. Alfonsi developed the framework for his course last year when he taught a class in Italian conversation during the Winter term. Awarded a Ford Faculty Summer Research Grant, he spent last summer in Italy, making slides and tape-recordings to illustrate many aspects of Italian life and culture. His innovative text departs from some of the traditional methods of teaching Italian which he considers have been too advanced for second-year students.

"Students may become dissatisfied with their progress," he explained, "if they are required to translate literary works which they cannot fully comprehend, or if their studies of the history of a country are too abstract to make its civilization come alive."

Written in vernacular Italian, his text is a continuous story which incorporates everyday situations and experiences and at the same time instructs students in the history, culture, and customs of Italy. By reading and speaking everyday Italian, he believes, students can acquire a useful vocabulary and enjoy gaining oral facility. "We talk about practical things and daily life in Italy," he said, "so that if my students go there, they will feel at home in their surroundings."

In "Maria va in Italia," the class accompanies a girl and two companions as they visit various regions of the country, each with its own history, customs and folklore. Chapter by



chapter, they become acquainted with the cultural diversity of a country whose people are especially aware of their regional differences.

Although the text is the main tool for instruction, students also review grammar, write compositions, and translate Italian works. They prepare answers to questions on each chapter, and do individual studies of artists, authors or historical events mentioned in the course. After this year's trial period, Dr. Alfonsi plans to present the text for publication.

'Camille'

(continued from page 1)

world phenomena . . . This study will surely bring to some, perhaps all, students participating a remarkable insight into what people under stress are like, and how they can come back after being on the brink of utter disaster."

Junior Year in France Marks Quarter Century

A small academic festival last October marked the 25th anniversary of the Sweet Briar Junior Year in France, bringing together a distinguished company of men and women who have long been affiliated with this program, as well as students who were enrolled last year.

Dr. Henri Peyre, emeritus professor of French at Yale and dean of French professors in this country, who was one of the original advisers to the JYF, gave the opening address. Speaking on "La révolte de la jeunesse française d'aujourd'hui," Dr. Peyre both enlightened and delighted his audience with his cogent, witty views of his topic.

Following President and Mrs. Whiteman's cocktail party at Sweet Briar House, the guests had dinner in the Refectory. Dr. Robert G. Marshall, new JYF director, presided.

Speakers who described various facets of the program's history were: Dr. Laura T. Buckham, emeritus professor of French, who paid tribute to the late Prof. Joseph E. Barker, who guided the program through its first 10 years; Dr. Martha Lucas Pate, fourth president of Sweet Briar and co-founder of the JYF; President-emeritus Anne Gary Taylor, who supported and strengthened it during her 21-year administration; Dr. R. John Matthew, who retired last spring after serving 15 years as director; Dr. Douglas Alden, professor of French at the University of Virginia, currently chairman of the JYF Advisory Committee; and Miss Lily von Klemperer, consultant on international education and formerly at the Institute of International Education.

Reminiscences of the initial year in Paris were brought by Dr. Theodore Andersson, professor-in-charge of the first group in 1948-49, now director of the Foreign Language Education Center at the University of Texas; and by Mrs. A. Lea Booth (Mary Morris Gamble), who was one of five Sweet Briar students in that group.

"When we, the first group, arrived in France in August of 1948, the after-effects of World War II were still much in evidence," Mrs. Booth said. "Due to a shortage of coal, we had no electricity two days a week and no heat until long after it was cold enough for our fingers to grow numb around our pencils in class. Hot water was in short supply and many foods were rationed . . . But 'our hearts were young and gay' and *nothing* could lessen the excitement of being twenty years old and in Paris."

Others who spoke briefly were Dr. Hester Hastings, professor of French at Randolph-Macon Woman's College and member of the JYF Advisory Committee; M. Gerard Abensour, representing the Cultural Services of the French government in New York; Catherine Rasmussen, '73, speaking for the students who were in France last year; and Prof. Peyre, whose gracious concluding remarks focused on the high regard with which the JYF is considered by the academic community in America and in France.

To commemorate this anniversary, a \$25,000 scholarship fund has been initiated and has met with encouraging response. Donors may send checks, payable to the Sweet Briar Junior Year in France, to the office at Sweet Briar.

Job Assistance Plans Attract Wide Response

Alumnae and parents have responded with enthusiasm to the letter sent by the student Job Placement Committee in December, asking for information about employment, job openings, possible study projects, and housing for students while they are job-hunting or during summer vacations or Winter term.

More than 300 replies have been received, and they are still coming in. A great deal of useful information and advice has already been accumulated, with many generous offers for housing. To express their approval of this endeavor, one alumna and her husband sent a check for \$2,000 to aid the project.

Students who are sorting the letters have learned that a liberal arts education prepared alumnae for an astonishing variety of fields. "Their letters are especially interesting," Cathy Rasmussen, the chairman, said, "because they tell us about the less publicized occupations, for example, small businesses and work in the arts and crafts."

Need Summer Help?

An attractive receptionist, an enthusiastic organizer, a house-sitter, or a responsible aide in business or child care? A Sweet Briar girl could be a valuable asset. We're available for Summer Vacation (beginning May 15).

Write to the Vocational Guidance Office, Sweet Briar, Virginia 24595.



Seniors Anita McVey and Cathy Rasmussen sorting replies to job-assistance letter.

Members of the committee are filing data according to job classifications, geographic location, and housing offers, and the files will be readily accessible to students who come to the Vocational Guidance Office.

In a new column in the *Sweet Briar News*, called Career Corner, committee members will contribute stories on alumnae in unusual or especially successful occupations, and actual job offers will be advertised.

Because of its location, size and special interest, the Washington Alumnae Club was asked to be the pilot group to keep the project active. These alumnae will continue to send advice about employment possibilities in the nation's capital, which is a mecca for young people looking for jobs. It is hoped that clubs in other large cities will follow suit.

As chairman of the club's placement service project, Mrs. James F. Olmsted will have the enthusiastic support of her husband, a member of the Board of Overseers, who earlier had expressed his interest in expanding vocational guidance services at Sweet Briar.

Early Decision Candidates Enrolled

Fifty-eight freshmen who will enter Sweet Briar in September have been accepted under the Early Decision Plan, forming the nucleus of the Class of 1977.

Coming from 22 states from Maine to Arizona, and from Bermuda, England, and San Salvador, these students attend 56 different schools and 53% will graduate from public high schools. Fourteen, including one day student, live in Virginia.

Carrying on family tradition, four are alumnae daughters, one is a granddaughter, three are sisters of present students and one is the sister of an alumna. Twelve are less closely related to former students.

Campus Notes

Starting this month, **Sylvia Wilkinson** will be the Sue Reid Slaughter Visiting Lecturer in English and will conduct the Writer's Workshop during the sabbatical leave of William E. Smart, Jr., assistant professor of English.

A poet and author of three novels about growing up in the rural south, Miss Wilkinson published her first novel, *Moss on the North Side*, in 1967. It achieved national recognition, as have two subsequent novels, *A Killing Frost*, and *Cale*. She has edited a handbook for teaching English and social studies in secondary schools and she is completing a book on sports-car racing. A number of her short stories and articles have been published in a variety of magazines, including *Sports Illustrated*.

A graduate of the University of North Carolina-Greensboro, Miss Wilkinson has a master's degree from Hollins College, where she was later writer-in-residence. She has taught at UNC-Asheville and Chapel Hill, and at the College of William and Mary. More recently she has been poet-in-residence and teacher for the Richmond Intercultural Center for the Humanities, in the city school system.

Miss Wilkinson gave a reading from some of her works at Sweet Briar last spring and she later served as judge for short stories entered in the annual competition for the Jean Boley Prize.

Kathleen E. Williams, '73, named as this year's outstanding chemistry major at Sweet Briar, will receive a James Lewis Howe Award from the Blue Ridge Section of the American Chemical Society. It will be presented at the organization's annual dinner in March.

A scholarly article by **Dr. Lysbeth W. Muncy**, professor of history and government, will be published in *Central European History*, a quarterly journal. Based on studies she completed during a sabbatical leave last year, the paper is called "The Prussian Landraete in the Last Years of the Monarchy: a case study of Pomerania and the Rheinland, 1890-1918." Dr. Muncy also read a paper, "The State, the Landrat and Rural Self-Government in Prussia during the Weimar Republic," at the recent annual meeting of the American Historical Association.

Dr. Joan R. Kent, assistant professor of history, is the author of an article to be published this spring in *The Bulletin of the Institute of Historical*

Research, an English journal. Its title is: "Attitudes of Members of the House of Commons to the Regulation of 'Personal Conduct' in Late Elizabethan and Early Stuart England." A Canadian, Dr. Kent holds a Ph.D. from the University of London and has taught at Sweet Briar since September 1971.

Dr. Ernest P. Edwards, professor of biology, has begun a five-year term on the Committee for the Arthur A. Allen Award at the Cornell University Ornithology Laboratory. Dr. Edwards was an advisee of the distinguished ornithologist at Cornell, where he received his Ph.D. in 1949.

An article on Italian novelist Antonio Moravia, by **Dr. Louis Kibler**, associate professor of French, appeared recently in *Italica*, journal of the American Association of Teachers of Italian. Dr. Kibler is preparing a book-length study of Moravia's works. Before coming to Sweet Briar last fall, Dr. Kibler taught French and Italian at Indiana University, where he earned his Ph.D. in French literature, and for a year he was resident director of the university's Study Center in Bologna, Italy. He is co-author of a textbook, *Giorno per giorno: Italian in Review*, published in 1971.

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